



[Face the Music June 5](#)

TRIVIA CHALLENGE: Cryptologists occasionally discuss whether music or musical notation could serve as a code or work as a kind of steganography to hide a secret message in plain text. In what classic movie by an internationally known director did a spy who knew kidnapping or death was imminent force a musicologist to memorize a piece of music and implore him to get it to the government?

TRIVIA ANSWER: [This was the set-up for the 1938 motion picture *The Lady Vanishes*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Neither the musical code nor the message it protected was ever fully explained—they were what Hitchcock called a “McGuffin,” a plot device that has no particular value except to set the story in motion.](#)